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Parks and Recreation Minutes 01/13/2004

Park and Recreation Commission Minutes

Tuesday, January 13, 2004 - 7:00 p.m.

Approved - Meeting Minutes

The meeting came to order at 7:00 PM.

Commissioners Present: Joseph Carabello, Thomas Caccavaro, Nancy Campbell, Leslie Mayer, and Donald Vitters (arrived 9:15 pm).

Staff Present: Jonathan Jalbert, Recreation Superintendent
Patsy Kraemer, Director of Human Services
Nancy Galkowski, Acting Town Manager

Recording Secretary: Laura Munsey

Others Present: Mr. Alex Hoffinger (Waldo Play ground)

Ms. Lisa Reale (Arlington Soccer Club)

1. Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Mr. Carabello welcomed the Commissioners and guests to the January 13, 2004 Park and Recreation Commission meeting.

Administrative changes were presented to the Recording Secretary, with a correction that the Open Space Committee meets the 1st Wednesday of every month. The minutes of the December 9, 2004 meeting were approved. (Unanimous Vote: 4-0)

2. Park Commissioner Roles and Responsibilities

Ms. Patsy Kraemer, Director of Human Services and Ms. Nancy Galkowski, Acting Town Manager, addressed the Commission and informed the Commission that the role of the Park and Recreation Commission is a broad based policy role. The Commission can set policies for Park and Recreational Facilities, however is up to the Recreation Director to implement those policies after a vote from the Commission. The day to day operation of the Recreation Division and the Veteran's Memorial Skating Rink is the responsibility of the Recreation Superintendent. The Superintendent can also bring issues of concern to the board for review, consideration, discussion, and approval, and together they can decide whether or not the situation rises to the level of a policy needing to be developed and implemented. If there are problems, questions, or concerns, they should be discussed with the Recreation Superintendent. One person should be in charge of the management aspect of the policies and how they are implemented and the town hired the Superintendent of Recreation to be that Manager. The Commission's role regarding fees for services provided by the Recreation Department and Veteran's Memorial Skating Rink are as follows: Fees would be recommended by the Recreation Superintendent, but those fees must be approved by the Park and Recreation Commission before being implemented. Information regarding these fees would be presented to the Commission by the Superintendent along with the full range of services that the Recreation Department offers and the charge the residents.

Ms. Mayer questioned whether fees should cover capital spending. Ms. Galkowski stated that Enterprise Funds must be self-sufficient, and that fees should provide for capital spending projects. Reserve funds should also be planned for through fees or earned revenue. It would be possible to put through a request for capital spending through Town Meeting, however, Ms. Galkowski feels it is highly unlikely to be approved because enterprise funds should be self sufficient, and would be competing with other Departments who do not have abilities to raise funds, and rely solely on the general fund. In an emergency situation, it may be possible to bond a project, however, the enterprise fund would need to pay it back.

A letter was sent to Senator Havern requesting assistance in obtaining a lease for the Veteran's Memorial Skating Rink.

There is currently a Sports Center Improvement Committee. Ms. Galkowski informed the Commission that this is a sub-committee of the Park and Recreation Commission. The role of the Sports Center Improvement Committee is to make recommendations for long-term improvements to the Veteran's Memorial Sports Center. Recommendations for capital improvements can be made by the SCIC, however, the grant money should be spent in the manner in which the Recreation Superintendent and Park and Recreation Commission feels is most appropriate. Any recommendations made by the Sports Center Improvement Committee will be voted on and approved by the Park & Recreation Commission. The Sports Center Improvement Committee should not be involved in any operational procedures.

3. Capital Project Review and CDBG Update

a. Architect review and selection on Buzzel, Locke, Waldo, and Crosby. Bids for architecture designs are in. The Park Commissioners have received copies for review. Leonard and Larson were the lowest bids, while Carol Johnson and Ryan Associates came in higher. Mr. Caccavaro pointed out that different bids presented different issues and requested that Leonard and Larson are invited in for an interview on January 28th prior to the Field Committee Meeting. Questions from neighborhood groups can be submitted to the chair of the Committee and the public can attend.

MOTION (made by Tom Caccavaro 2nd by Leslie Mayer)

THE COMMISSION REQUESTS THAT LEONARD ASSOICATES AND LARSON ASSOCIATES COME IN FOR AN INTERVIEW BEFORE FINAL AWARD OF THE CONTRACT.

UNANIMOUS (4-0) IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION

Mr. Caccavaro also stated his desire to have the Town's Purchasing Agent involved in the future submission of RFP's.

b. Surveyor review of proposals. Mr. Vitters, upon arrival, stated that the surveying projects will be completed by the Town via independent bids (Everett Brooks, Medford Engineering, or Rober Surveys) and will be awarded to the lowest bidder (Medford Engineering). Architects will not be responsible for conducting the surveys.

c. Spy Pond Shores – Phase 2. Carol Johnson is working on this project. Chief Maimone, of the Arlington Fire Department, would like the emergency boat ramp moved to the Spy Pond Lane Entrance. Regarding the relocation of Linwood Circle, some neighbors would like to relocate the Circle and make more green space, however it will also eliminate parking, which is already limited. Moving this circle would also need collaboration with the conservation commission due to construction so close to the shore.

MOTION (made by Nancy Campbell, 2nd by Tom Caccavaro)

THE COMMISSION SHALL NOT RELOCATE LINWOOD CIRCLE AND WILL LEAVE IT WHERE IT CURRENTLY IS LOCATED.

UNANIMOUS (4-0) IN THE AFFIRMATIVE

The Irrigation System at Spy Pond Shores could be sprinklers or yard hydrants. Yard hydrants are less expensive, however they would require manual watering. The grass is a feeding ground for geese, and it may be difficult to maintain the grassy area at Spy Pond. No decision will be made at this time.

d. Robbins Farm Project List. Mr. Vitters has spoken with the contractors and architect regarding the punch list and is working with them to resolve these issues. No additional action by the Commission is recommended at this time.

4. Committee Updates

Field Policy Committee: Field Policy Committee. Field Policy Committee meeting will be on January 28th at the Whittemore Robbins House. Jonathan Jalbert re-submitted warrant articles to the Selectmen's Office, and a Warrant article from Finance Committee is also submitted regarding field fees. John Maher, Legal counsel for the town is looking at increasing fines for violations, however the Park & Recreation Commission will not look at increasing user fees at this time.

Ms. Mayer requested the Park and Recreation Commission submit warrant articles regarding the Town's Sign By-Law. She introduced these warrant articles with the intent that athletic groups and charitable fundraisers could, through a special permitting process, install temporary signs at fields in town. The Park & Recreation Commission would establish the rules and conditions in collaboration with the School Committee for school fields. The money raised through this marketing effort would go directly to the athletic organizations for fundraising efforts. Mr. Jalbert raised the issue that many parks do not have appropriate fencing for these signs and some user groups may not have the same opportunity. Mr. Carabello raised the issue that although personally he may support this issue, it may not be the Park and Recreation Commission's responsibility to establish fund-raising efforts for independent groups, and that any resident and 10 citizens could submit warrant articles, if they so desired. It was explained that this merely provides an opportunity for groups to raise funds that doesn't currently exist. The Commission is not involved in the fundraising effort, but would control through special permits what user groups are allowed to do. Ms. Campbell and Mr. Vitters like that the Park & Recreation Commission could have control of the permits, as did Mr. Caccavaro, who also wants to meet with the user groups regarding this issue.

MOTION (made by Leslie Mayer, 2nd by Tom Caccavaro)

THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION SHALL SUBMIT 2 WARRANT ARTICLES AS STATED, SUBJECT TO LEGAL COUNSEL'S APPROVAL.

VOTE (4-1) (MAYER, CACCAVARO, CAMPBELL, VITTERS - AFFIRMATIVE) (CARABELLO - NEGATIVE)

Sports Center Improvement Committee:

MOTION (made by Thomas Caccavaro, 2nd by Leslie Mayer)

THE PARK COMMISSION SHALL DISBAND THE CURRENT SPORTS CENTER IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE DUE TO THE DEFINITION OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS DEFINED BY THE ACTING TOWN MANAGER.

UNANIMOUS VOTE (5-0) IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION

MOTION (made by Thomas Caccavaro, 2nd by Leslie Mayer)

THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION SHALL SET UP A SUB-COMMITTEE TO EVALUATE FUTURE, LONG RANGE CAPITAL PLANNING PROJECTS AT THE VETERAN'S MEMORIAL SPORTS CENTER.

RECOMMENDATIONS SHALL BE PRESENTED TO THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION FOR FINAL APPROVAL. THE SUB-COMMITTEE WILL BE COMPRISED OF THE FOLLOWING REPRESENTATIVES.

- (1) MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC (APPOINTED BY THE CHAIR OF THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION)
- (1) PRESIDENT OF ARLINGTON YOUTH HOCKEY OR APPROVED DESIGNEE
- (1) ATHLETIC DIRECTOR OF ARLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL OR APPROVED DESIGNEE
- (1) ATHLETIC DIRECTOR OF ARLINGTON CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL OR APPROVED DESIGNEE
- (1) MEMBER OF THE PARK AND RECREATION COMMISSION
- (1) FACILITY MANAGER OF THE VETERAN'S MEMORIAL SPORTS CENTER
- (1) RECREATION SUPERINTENDENT

UNANIMOUS VOTE (5-0) IN FAVOR OF THE MOTION.

Mr. Carabello appointed Mr. Thomas Caccavaro as the Park and Recreation Commission Representative.

Open Space Committee. Symmes Proposals are being discussed. A public meeting will be held on 1/26th 7:30 at the Town Hall. The Open Space Committee will follow this process. Some proposals may return parkland to the town, some have open space surrounding residential areas, some include a vista park, and some have active and passable recreation space. The Open Space Committee is also working on management plans. A preliminary plan for the Res is being prepared as an example. This is a 1st pass and is not finalized. Parking issues have arisen at the Rink. It is scheduled that a gate will be built in the spring. Some cars have attempted to park on the Bike Path and a gate should eliminate access by a vehicle. This pathway however, cannot be blocked because it is an emergency egress access point.

Friends Groups.

Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park. Menotomy & Hills Pond Proposed an annual maintenance permit for miscellaneous projects regarding pond erosion control. Ms. Mayer circulated the proposed draft document to the other Commissioners for input. Bernice Jones had previously worked with the Friends groups and Conservation Commission to streamline permitting at Menotomy Rocks Park, and we currently need a new representative to work with them.

Mr. Carabello appointed Ms. Mayer to work with Friends of Menotomy Rocks Park.

5. Recreation and Rink Update

a. Recreation Fees Recommendation. The Finance Committee directed the Recreation Superintendent to evaluate all fees. This was done to get a handle on the entire town budget in these tough economic times. Every department in town was requested to analyze their budget, expenses, and fees charged where appropriate. Additional administrative costs are currently being added to the Recreation Budget, which were not previously charged (i.e. health insurance, postage, longevity, etc.). Recreation and Rink Enterprise funds must remain self-sufficient, with no tax money being used to support them. A vote will be requested in February to raise fees for Recreational Programs. Report on Rink Fees will be presented in March for next year's implementation. A request was made by Mr. Carabello to see what fee increases were previously made. A 3% increase was made across the board last year.

b. Volunteer Credit Proposal. Mr. Jalbert requests that the Park and Recreation Commission look at the practice of issuing financial credits to user groups at the Veteran's Memorial Skating Rink. This has been a long standing practice and issues have arisen regarding equity, legality, and fairness. A recommendation will be submitted at the next Park and Recreation Commission Meeting to address this concern.

The Commission adjourned at 11:00 pm